

# The Habitat HERALD

January 2012

Volume 13, Issue 1

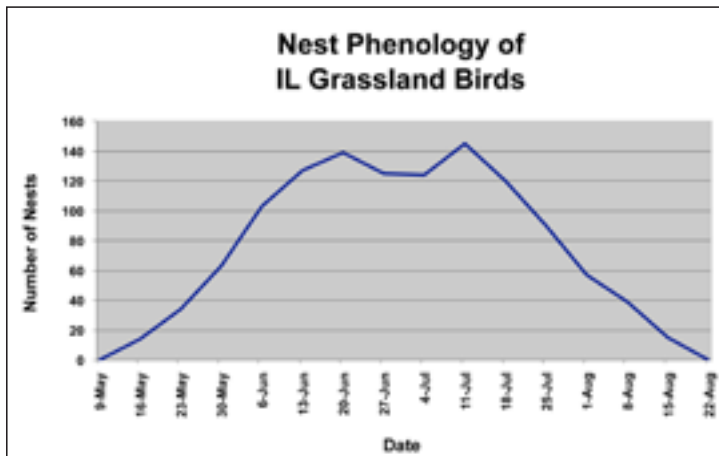
## Birds get a break with later grassland mowing

By Bob Fisher



Photo: Bobolink by Mary Kay Rubey

*Delaying mowing!  
Summer grassland bird nest gains  
on DuPage landfills.*



Dates when NE-IL nests are active or flightless young are likely to be on site, out of 616 nests. Data from Jim Herkert, Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Bad haiku, of course, but it gets the point across. Scott Meister of the DuPage County Forest Preserve District's Natural Resource Management team, and Drew Bergenthal of the District's Office of Environmental Services, took that mantra to heart after seeing Jim Herkert's graphical evidence (shown here and presented at Wild Things in 2010); Herkert's data indicates that postponing grassland mowing until late summer increases the chances of successful nesting and fledging young. Scott and Drew carried that message to the District's two jointly operated landfills - Greene Valley (Waste Management) and Mallard Lake (BFI) forest preserves. Both companies responded positively. Using the same mowing contractor, both elected to postpone the start of mowing until about September 1. The result: Increased survival and fledging success for the bird species nesting in these otherwise undisturbed grassland habitats. Go there next summer and see:

*Bubbling Bobolinks,  
and staccato Dickcissels  
Celebrate new life!*

See story on pg. 8 for related grassland mowing results in Cook County.

# The Habitat Project serves the grassroots of the Chicago Wilderness conservation community:

The future of nature in Chicago Wilderness depends very much on the 995 site monitors and stewards and the thousands of other volunteers and staff who work for the wellness of animals and habitat. To help out at a site – or to adopt one yourself – see the opportunities below.

## Grassroots Opportunities



### **WEEKEND WORKDAYS**

[WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG/RESTORATION PROJECTS](http://WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG/RESTORATION_PROJECTS)  
OR THE **VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP NETWORK WEBSITE:**  
[WWW.NATURE.ORG/WHEREWEWORK/NORTHAMERICA/STATES/ILLINOIS/VOLUNTEER/ART9844.HTML](http://WWW.NATURE.ORG/WHEREWEWORK/NORTHAMERICA/STATES/ILLINOIS/VOLUNTEER/ART9844.HTML)

### **SITE STEWARDS**

TRAIN TO SUPERVISE VOLUNTEER RESTORATION OF A PRAIRIE, WOODLAND OR WETLAND PRESERVE.  
SEND YOUR NAME AND AREA OF INTEREST TO [KGLENNEMEIER@AUDUBON.ORG](mailto:KGLENNEMEIER@AUDUBON.ORG) OR CONTACT THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR OF YOUR NEARBY COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OR SIMILAR LANDOWNER.

### **BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK**

LEE RAMSEY 847-501-4683

### **BIRD BLITZES TO MONITOR**

#### **GRASSLANDS, WOODLANDS, SHRUBLANDS, OR WETLANDS**

JUDY POLLOCK 847-328-1250

### **CHICAGO WILDERNESS CALLING FROG SURVEY**

KAREN GLENNEMEIER 847-328-1250

### **BUTTERFLY MONITORING**

ILLINOIS BUTTERFLY MONITORING NETWORK, TOM PETERSON 630-443-8604

### **DRAGONFLY MONITORING NETWORK**

GARETH BLAKESLEY, [ILLINOISODONTOLOGICALSURVEY@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ILLINOISODONTOLOGICALSURVEY@GMAIL.COM), 708-361-1873

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK: SEARCH: ILLINOIS ODONTOLOGICAL SURVEY

### **PLANT COMMUNITY AUDITS OF WOODS, PRAIRIES, OR WETLANDS**

KAREN GLENNEMEIER 847-328-1250

### **PLANTS OF CONCERN RARE PLANT MONITORING**

SUSANNE MASI 847-835-8269

### **ADVOCACY AND POLICY WORK**

[WWW.SIERRACLUB.ORG/IL/](http://WWW.SIERRACLUB.ORG/IL/) OR [WWW.FOTFP.ORG](http://WWW.FOTFP.ORG) (COOK COUNTY) OR [WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG)

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We welcome to our newsletter  
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lickers, photographers, graphic  
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who would enjoy getting involved.

To learn more, contact Karen  
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[kglenneier@audubon.org](mailto:kglenneier@audubon.org).

# Readers Respond. Results from the Habitat Herald Survey

More than 200 people responded to the September *Habitat Herald* survey, and we learned a great deal about how readers think we can best serve the needs of the conservation community. The clearest message we received was that the *Herald* is a major means of connecting us to each other, and people are largely happy with its current focus. We did not hear a hue and cry for major changes.

We did, however, hear a desire for some significant additions to the types and details of stories we are covering. The *Herald* team is currently working on a content strategy for future issues, and we've incorporated a few of the ideas into the current issue.

Here is what we learned from the survey:

- Readers would appreciate more stories that go beyond being interesting and also are informative, instructional, and practically useful to our work as stewards, monitors, and managers. (See stories on pages 1, 4, and 8 and let us know how we're doing.)
- Many readers would like to see more stories that provide the results and application of monitoring data, so that we can see how our data are important and also learn how best to manage our sites in light of the new data. (See stories on pages 6 and 10 and let us know how we're doing).

Readers also were interested in stories that:

- cover local natural history
- focus on the big picture – deep thinkers or connections to larger geographic contexts
- cover a diversity of geographic areas
- provide resources and references to help us learn more
- focus on youth and schools.

One of the best things we learned from the survey is that there are lots of people who would enjoy becoming a part of the *Herald* team. The new team is meeting this month to chart the course forward for the *Herald*. Please contact Karen Glennemeier if you'd like to join us. [kglenneier@audubon.org](mailto:kglenneier@audubon.org)

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AUDUBON'S WORK INCLUDES SCIENCE, MONITORING, STEWARDSHIP, AND ADVOCACY. WE WORK WITH CITIZEN LEADERS TO INVOLVE ENTIRE COMMUNITIES IN THIS WORK. WE ORGANIZE NEW STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVES, TRAIN MONITORS, DESIGN SCIENTIFIC STUDIES, ANALYZE DATA, AND ENSURE THAT GOOD ON-THE-GROUND ACTION RESULTS FROM EVERYONE'S HARD WORK. WE ORGANIZE AND SUPPORT EVENTS SUCH AS WILD THINGS, FIELD SEMINARS, MONITORING "BLITZES," AND STEWARDS' WORKSHOPS. WE MAINTAIN A STEWARDSHIP INTERN PROGRAM, PUBLISH THE HABITAT HERALD, AND SUPPORT AND COACH LEADERS AND INDIVIDUALS AS RESOURCES PERMIT. WE BELIEVE IN THIS WORK, AND WE HOPE YOU DO TOO. WE MUCH APPRECIATE ALL CONTRIBUTIONS AT 1718 SHERMAN AVE., EVANSTON, IL, 60201, OR CONTACT JUSTIN PEPPER AT [JPEPPER@AUDUBON.ORG](mailto:jpepper@audubon.org).

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# The Third Generation: Learning from decades of grassland habitat restoration

*By Gabe Powers,  
MCCD Restoration Ecologist*

*Each generation of grassland restoration teaches us something new. Bird monitor Dave Miller has provided data to MCCD ecologists about the responses of birds to the District's grassland restoration at Nippersink, allowing them to adjust each new grassland restoration accordingly.*

*Clockwise from upper right: hybrid prairie; railroad tallgrass prairie remnant; 1980s tallgrass restoration; cool season pasture.*



Current estimates suggest less than 1% of Illinois' original prairie habitat remains today. The modern grassland birds of Illinois have evolved with multiple alterations to their original vast prairie landscape. Surviving populations have utilized pasture ground, hayfields and most recently CRP and prairie restorations for breeding habitat. After 30 years of monitoring grassland breeding birds in McHenry County, data have been obtained from grasslands of varying size, structure, composition, and vegetative density. While other faunal groups, such as butterflies, generally flourish in compositionally diverse grasslands, those with structural variability appear to provide the best breeding habitat for a varied suite of grassland birds.

The McHenry County Conservation District began grassland restoration efforts in 1983. The first generation of District grassland restorations were consistent with the industry standard at the time: native tallgrass prairie dominated by big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass, and switchgrass. In order to evaluate restoration efforts, monitoring throughout the county began shortly thereafter in 1985 by District staff and volunteers.

Early monitoring results were disappointing, as the breeding grassland bird response to the newly created habitat was negligible at best. However, birds were observed utilizing typical cool season pasture ground, which had been remained in cover as acquired by the District. The dominant vegetation in the cool season pastures were smooth brome, redbtop, Kentucky bluegrass, timothy, and orchard grass. Puzzled over the lack of bird utilization of the native habitat, restoration practitioners began evaluating the structural differences between tallgrass and cool season grasslands. Most notably, the tallgrass prairie consisted of dense, tall vegetation with relatively uniform height from five to seven feet. In contrast, the cool season grasslands were of variable density and primarily shorter structured, one to three feet in height.

Armed with results from the first generation grasslands, the District created a second generation grassland mix specifically targeted to produce quality habitat for Illinois' grassland breeding birds in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This mix, coined the hybrid prairie, utilized both native and non-native grass species; primarily little bluestem, side oats gramma, redbtop, smooth brome, and Kentucky bluegrass. While the bird response from the hybrid prairie was impressive, the hybrid prairie created a host of other management issues, including a shortened burn window from dominance of cool season grass, reduced resilience to invasive forbs, and a reliance on non-native species for habitat.

Through evaluation of restored grassland habitats, results from twenty years of monitoring efforts, and comparisons of restored grassland structure to remnant prairie structure, the third generation of grassland bird seed mix was created. Remnant tallgrass prairie structure is vastly different from the original tallgrass restorations. While early restorations are relatively monotypic in composition and structure, the remnants have a diverse composition of plant species, yielding variable vegetation densities and heights. The third generation grassland attempts to emulate the structure of remnant prairie, while only using native vegetation and without the benefit of comparable plant composition due to financial constraints (a cost estimate of plant species necessary to begin approaching

plant composition of a remnant currently exceeds ten thousand dollars per acre).

In 2009, as part of "A Grassland Bird Response to Restoration" case study initiated in 2005,

**“The third generation grassland attempts to emulate the structure of remnant prairie... The grassland bird response has been encouraging.”**

the District sowed its third generation grassland bird mix on approximately 100 acres at Nippersink North Branch Conservation Area, near Richmond, Illinois. The dominant grasses in the mix include prairie dropseed, little bluestem, side oats gramma, and June grass. After the grassland has become established an inner-seeding of native tallgrasses from local remnant prairie stock will take place. Furthermore, restoration staff plans to use specialized vegetation management in an attempt to create microstructure for specific niche habitat species. For example, vesper sparrows are currently utilizing an open structured gravel hill within the third generation restoration. In order to maintain proper habitat, the plan is to sow short-statured, allelopathic betony in hopes of maintaining the short, open structured habitat. While the restoration process is slow, the anticipated grassland structure will be variable in both vegetation density and height. While the results are preliminary at this point, the grassland bird response has been encouraging, with 16 species of grassland breeding birds observed during surveys.

Looking forward to future restorations, the District will continue to evaluate grassland structure and function and will experiment with composition, structure, and size in order to provide the best grassland habitat for as many species as possible. Each generation of prairie restoration continues to increase in plant diversity; therefore I imagine the next generation of grassland bird mix will include prairie sedges as they become more affordable for large-scale restoration. Until then, we will continue to provide as much variable-structured grasslands as possible with the current resources available.

# Counting Cranes

*By Mary Lou Mellon*



Sandhill Silhouettes: Dick River

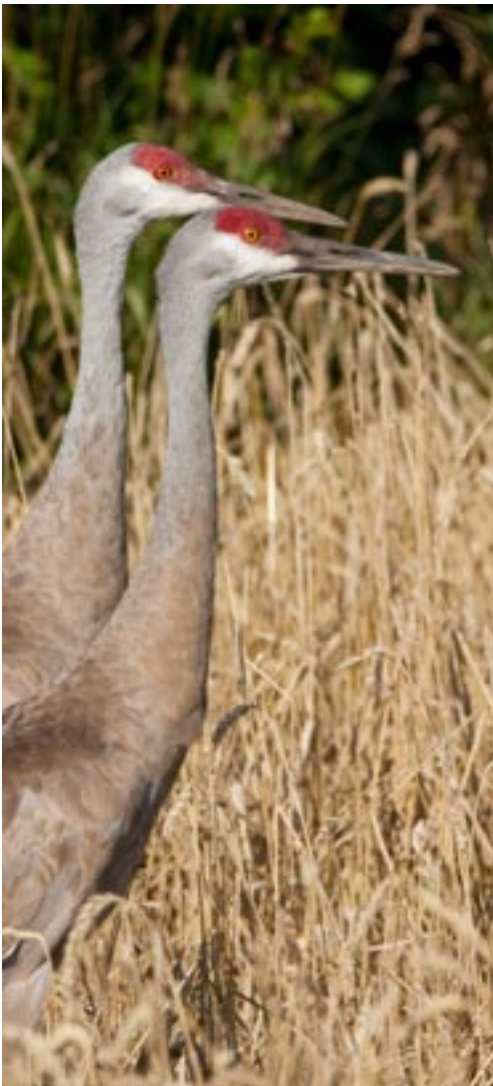


Photo: Mary Kay Rubey

Few things are more pleasing than seeing and hearing Sandhill Cranes fly overhead, making their haunting, bubbling flight calls. The only thing more enjoyable may be seeing these large, gray, long-necked and long-legged birds perform their elaborate courtship dances.

In North America northern populations of Sandhills are migratory and are known to breed in Alaska, northern Canada, and states around the Great Lakes, with a few populations across Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon. Three southern populations are usually non-migratory, remaining in their Florida, Georgia, and Alabama breeding sites year-round. There is a spring migratory staging area in the Platte River Valley in Nebraska that is a near Mecca for crane lovers.

The Greater Sandhill Crane is the subspecies found in our region. These birds are long-lived (20 years or more), and they don't breed until they are two to seven years old. They are tall (about 4.5 to 5 feet); their wingspan is about five to six feet; and their weight can range from 10 to 14 pounds. Their plumage is typically varying shades of gray, though in many areas Sandhills preen with iron-rich mud, creating a rusty-brown color that lasts until they molt the stained feathers in the fall. They have a white cheek, and their forehead and crown are covered with reddish skin. Legs and toes are black, and males and females are similar, though in a breeding pair the male may tend to be larger.

“This is...one of the largest citizen-based wildlife surveys in the world.”

There are only two species of crane found in North America: the Sandhill Crane, which is the most abundant of the world's cranes, and the Whooping Crane, which is the rarest of the world's 15 crane species. Sandhill populations in the Arctic and northern boreal forest are thought to have been stable for the past ten years, while the populations in the temperate regions of the U.S. and Canada have been expanding rapidly. One of the ways we know this is the Annual Midwest Crane Count, one of the largest citizen-based wildlife surveys in the world.

Sponsored by the International Crane Foundation (ICF) in Baraboo, Wisconsin, the Annual Midwest Crane Count began in Wisconsin in 1976. The Count expanded to include other states in the upper Midwest in 1994. Today

more than 100 counties in portions of six states (Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) participate. In 2011, 1640 sites were monitored by 2803 observers; the total number of cranes found was 10,442 with 1669 breeding pairs.

The count is held annually in April. Illinois' participation in 2011 included nine counties, 119 sites, and 239 counters. They tallied 270 cranes and 64 breeding pairs. Local participating counties were DuPage, Kane, Lake, and McHenry. Cindy Rendl coordinates the Crane Count for Lake County and is delighted that the birds are thriving in northern Illinois. One of the premiere sites for Sandhills in Lake County is Rollins Savanna. According to Cindy, "The restoration of the wetlands at Rollins Savanna has brought in many cranes on a regular basis. That's pretty impressive for a location that has been only recently restored from farmland."

Whooping Cranes were added to the count in 2005 and are being carefully brought back from near extinction. The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP) was formed in 1999 to establish a new, migratory flock of Whooping Cranes to the core part of their historic breeding range. This flock of approximately 100 birds migrates between Wisconsin and coastal Florida.

The Crane Count provides critical information regarding the increase or decrease of populations and their responses to habitat management. Stacy Iwanicki, the McHenry County coordinator for the Crane Count, believes the restoration work that has been done in the wetland areas of McHenry County is paying off. After several years of limited count participation, McHenry County tallied 53 cranes, including 11 bonded pairs, at 27 sites, with 71 observers in 2011.

Bobbi Asher, a four-year participant of the Crane Count in Carroll County, says that count day is one of her favorites. She monitors a wetland site that is a backwater of the Mississippi and says, "As the day gets brighter, the wetland scene unfolds. I am amazed at how perfectly camouflaged the large cranes on a nest are. I know they're there but frequently I don't see them until they move."



Photo: Mary Kay Rubey



Photo: Ed Beiffuss

Thousands of people count tens-of-thousands of cranes every April in the upper Midwest.

**April 14th** is the date for the 2012 Annual Midwest Crane Count. If you live in Kane County, contact Roger Hotham at 847-697-7484. For Lake County, Cindy Rendl at 847-968-3287. For McHenry County, Stacy Iwanicki at 815-344-1294. For all other counties or to become your county's Crane Count Coordinator, contact ICF at [cranecount@savingcranes.org](mailto:cranecount@savingcranes.org) or (608) 356-9462. For more information, visit [www.cranecount.org](http://www.cranecount.org)

### Check out the new frog database!

Thanks to many hours of heroic work by Marilyn Schweitzer, Will Freyman, and David Steh, our frog database is now searchable!

Now we can do things like:

- Download frog data into an Excel-compatible spreadsheet, by county, by route, or by year.
- View the data for any site, year, or species on a map.
- See the latest dates for which data were recorded at a site, on the map.
- And more!

Go to [www.habitatproject.org](http://www.habitatproject.org), click on "Calling Frog Survey" in the lower left menu, then click on "Data Entry and Output" in the upper right menu.

Please let us know what you think, and do tell us how you are using the data – it might make a good *Herald* story one day.



Illustration: Lynda Wellis



Photo: Dickcissel by Mary Kay Rubey

# The Mower Measures Up

*By Judy Pollock*



Photo: Eastern Meadowlark by Mary Kay Rubey

This story begins in 2003, when Alan Anderson, Judy Pollock, Lee Ramsey, and Stan Stec sent a note to Cook County birders, asking them if they had bird data for preserves where woody plants were invading grasslands and grassland bird populations were decreasing. After compiling the necessary data, in 2004 the Bird Conservation Network and Audubon Chicago Region sent a list of seven sites to then-Superintendent Steve Bylina with a request to add grassland management at these sites. Alan was the inspiration for this project. He made regular visits to all of the sites and kept track of declining populations of bobolinks, meadowlarks, and other grassland species.

The work started first at Spring Creek, and then in 2007 it really took off at the other sites when FPDCC decision-makers Richard Newhard and John McCabe decided that the rest of the work could be done by their staff on mowers – either brushhogs or the big, powerful Seppi mowers. Monitors mapped brushy sections in large, productive grasslands and left small areas for shrubland birds. Over the next three winters, district crews successfully opened the grasslands at all of the sites. Steve and Jill Flexman, stewards at Schaumburg Grasslands in the Poplar Creek preserve, are particularly impressed with the John Henry-like work of John Yapelli, who is systematically eliminating their hedgerows: “He’s a beast! He’s worn through two or three mowers already.” Hedgerows degrade grassland habitat and provide lanes for predators.

Now that a few years have passed, it is a good time to look at the results of this work. Thanks to the monitoring of Alan, Stan, Lee, and Steve, we have a good picture of bird populations at these sites since the 90s. (See the chart below for trends.) The results vary by bird, as we would expect, since the birds have different habits. Grasshopper Sparrows, which use areas with a higher percentage of bare ground than the others, showed the most positive results. Henslow’s Sparrows, which are known to shun areas in the year or two after a fire or other disturbance and then to return, showed that same pattern here. Meadowlarks, Bobolinks, and Savannah Sparrows all showed increases at several sites and returned to others that they had been absent from since the earlier part of the decade. Of these, the least positive results were for the bobolinks,



Photo: Grasshopper Sparrow by Arlene Kozioł



including large decreases in bobolinks at two of the sites since the 90s. There are many factors that impact Bobolinks, including the possibility that climate change may be pushing this species northward, as we currently are at the southern limit of its range. Bobolinks have returned in large numbers to other sites in our region that were not part of this study but that have received ongoing management attention, including control of invasives, establishment of native prairie vegetation, and a regular burn regimen. We will continue to monitor the status of this and other grassland species at all sites.

The shrubland bird trends were somewhat surprising. Although we might expect that the mowing would negatively impact all shrubland birds (and indeed Eastern Kingbird and Brown Thrasher numbers did decrease after the mowing), Field Sparrow numbers remained unchanged. It appears they were still able to find places to nest in the remaining shrubs in the more open habitats.

Overall, grassland birds showed a positive response to the mowing program, and we can say that the program was successful. If you have a chance, stop by these preserves in June and enjoy the grassland birds... and then send Alan a thank you!



Photo: Savannah Sparrow by Arlene Kazial

<b>Grassland Birds</b>					
<b>Site</b>	<b>Bobolink</b>	<b>Eastern Meadowlark</b>	<b>Grasshopper Sparrow</b>	<b>Henslow's Sparrow</b>	<b>Savannah Sparrow</b>
<b>Bartel Northeast</b>	returned	stable	returned	stable	returned
<b>King's Grove</b>	decreased, then stable	*	stable	*	*
<b>Midlothian Meadows</b>	*	stable	*	*	*
<b>Paul Douglas</b>	increased	increased	stable	decreased after mowing, then increased	stable
<b>Schaumburg</b>	decreased	stable	increased	stable	stable
<b>Spring Creek</b>	stable	returned	returned	decreased	returned
<b>Summary</b>	<b>mixed</b>	<b>stable or positive</b>	<b>positive</b>	<b>stable (some decreases just after mowing)</b>	<b>stable or positive</b>

<b>Shrubland Birds</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Brown Thrasher</b>	<b>Eastern Kingbird</b>	<b>Field Sparrow</b>
<b>Bartel Northeast</b>	*	stable	stable
<b>King's Grove</b>	*	*	*
<b>Midlothian Meadows</b>	*	*	stable
<b>Paul Douglas</b>	decreased	decreased	stable
<b>Schaumburg</b>	decreased	decreased	stable
<b>Spring Creek</b>	stable	decreased	stable
<b>Summary</b>	<b>negative</b>	<b>negative</b>	<b>stable</b>

Summary of results from large-scale brush removal at six Cook County grassland sites. Results from Bode Lake Road were inconclusive and are not shown here.

# Banner year for rare dragonflies

By Cindy Grau

This summer was an impressive year for those on the hunt for dragonflies and damselflies in the Chicago Wilderness area. Monitors and scientists found rare species and even some “firsts” for Illinois.

Marla Garrison, author of *Field Guide for Chicago Damselflies*, and Matt Eyles, a natural resource manager for the McHenry County Conservation District, were able to locate 65 species while making weekly outings on waterways in the area. Some of their unexpected finds included rare species of bluets, like the Hagen’s Bluet, which had only been recorded once before in the area. Another notable find was the River Jewelwing, which is a State Listed species. And although they were told that they wouldn’t find clubtails, they found seven species, four of them very good finds: the Dusky Clubtail, Midland Clubtail, and the Arrow Clubtail. Most important was the aptly named Elusive Clubtail, which had not been found in McHenry County for over 100 years and is considered uncommon to rare nationwide.

“It takes a lot of search hours to find...these rare species.”

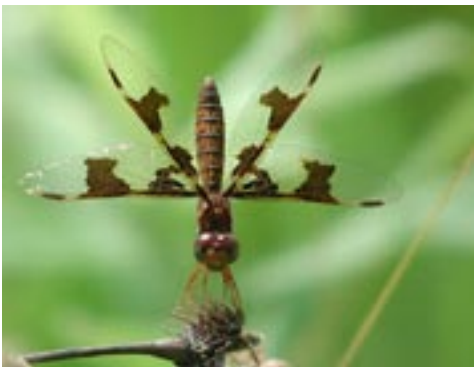
At the same time farther south in LaSalle, Putnam, and Lee Counties, Cindy McKee has been undertaking a research project since 2009 with the Illinois State Museum. She spent 278 hours in the field this year and had spectacular finds as well. Her most notable find was the Black Meadowhawk, which had never been seen in Illinois before, as we are at the very southern edge of its natural range. So important was her find that Cindy was asked to help an ecologist from the Wisconsin DNR collect larval specimens of the meadowhawk to bring back to Wisconsin.

We don’t know why we found all of these unusual species this year, but the answer is at least in part because we now have so many people looking for them. This year’s findings are a perfect example of the importance of our monitoring networks – it takes a lot of search hours to find some of these rare species, and the more monitors are searching, the better we are able to outline the true ranges of uncommon species or learn whether rare species still exist in Illinois.

We do know that these species require clean watersheds, and so their existence is a good sign for the quality of wetland habitats where they have been found. Going forward, the data will tell us whether this year’s findings were anomalies or were stable populations that might grow over time. When integrated with data on fish, mussels, snakes, frogs, and other taxa these data will yield a rich picture of the health of the wetlands. They will also tell us what effect restoration work is having on dragonfly populations and other wetland denizens.

In the meantime there are some dragonfly and damselfly lovers that can’t wait to get to the field again next year.

**Please note:** Longtime leader Craig Stettner is handing off the reins of the Dragonfly Monitoring Network to Gareth Blakesley, who was one of the early founders of the network. Gareth’s contact information is: [illinoisodontologicalsurvey@gmail.com](mailto:illinoisodontologicalsurvey@gmail.com); 708-361-1873.



Upper photo: Midland Clubtail by Ann Johnson  
Lower photo: Black Meadowhawk by R. Geerts

Photos: Eastern Amberwing, Widow Skimmer, and Jade Clubtail by Carolyn Fields

# Frog Monitoring Workshops 2012

These workshops are for both beginning and experienced monitors. We'll teach and review the calls of our 13 species of frogs and toads, help new monitors find survey sites, and discuss the monitoring protocol. Experienced monitors are encouraged to attend, in order to learn any protocol changes, obtain data sheets, review frog calls, and share lessons learned from last year. Please note that you only need attend one workshop.

## **Cook County:**

**Wednesday, February 15th, 7:00-9:00pm**

Southeast. Sand Ridge Nature Center, 15891 Paxton Ave, Sou Holland. The program will be run by Laura Milkert of the Field Museum. Contact Laura at [lmilkert@fieldmuseum.org](mailto:lmilkert@fieldmuseum.org)

**Saturday February 18th, 9:00-11:00am**

Northwest. Crabtree Nature Center in Barrington. Located one mile west of Barrington Road on Palatine Road. Contact Matt Hokanson, 708-408-2933.

## **DuPage County:**

**Saturday, February 11th, 1:00-3:00pm  
with pizza from noon to 1:00**

We're trying something new this year - a joint feedback session for program monitors in the frog and bluebird programs. We'll discuss the data you've collected and the future of each program. This will also be a chance for returning monitors to pick up forms, equipment or any needed materials. Bluebird feedback session: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Pizza lunch: 12 - 1 p.m. Frog feedback session: 1 - 3 p.m. To register and for more information, please call volunteer services at (630) 933-7681 by February 4.

## **Will County:**

**Saturday, February 18th, 8:30am-noon**

Sugar Creek Administration Center, 17540 West Laraway Road, Joliet, Illinois. Contact Richard Wachenheim for more information, 815-722-8191, [rwachenheim@fpdwc.org](mailto:rwachenheim@fpdwc.org)

## **Indiana:**

**Wednesday, February 22nd, 7:00-9:00pm**

Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 North 25 E., Chesterton, IN. Meet at the Nature Center. Workshop hosted by the Shirley Heinze Land Trust and led by Alan Resetar. Contact Jim Erdelac with questions: [volunteer@heinzetrust.org](mailto:volunteer@heinzetrust.org)



Illustration: Lynda Wallis

## **Kane and Kendall Counties:**

**Saturday February 11th, 9:00am-noon**

Hickory Knolls Discovery Center, 3795 Campton Hills Road, St. Charles. Hickory Knolls is located past the west athletic field parking lot at James O. Breen Community Park at the corner of Peck and Campton Hills Roads in St. Charles. Parking near the building is limited; please carpool if possible. For Kane County, contact Pam Otto, 630-513-4346, [potto@stcparks.org](mailto:potto@stcparks.org).

For Kendall County, contact Jody Strohm, 630-553-4025, [JStrohm@co.kendall.il.us](mailto:JStrohm@co.kendall.il.us)

## **Lake County, IL:**

**Tuesday, February 21st, 7:00-9:00 pm**

Ryerson Conservation Area's Welcome Center at 21950 N. Riverwoods Road, Deerfield. Located about a mile south of Half Day Road, between I-94 and Hwy 45. Head west on Half Day road from I-94, then turn south on Riverwoods Road and look for the entrance on your right. Contact Gary Glowacki (847) 968-3264.

## **McHenry County:**

**Wednesday, February 22nd, 7:00-9:00pm**

Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake. At 2112 Behan Road, just south of Rte 176, between Rte 31 and the Fox River. Heading NE from Crystal Lake on Rte 176, turn right on Behan Rd after passing Valley View Road, take another right at the end of the road. The entrance to PEC is past the curve on the left. Please call (815) 479-5779 to pre-register. Contact Sara Denham, 815-728-8307, for more information.

## Chicago Wilderness Habitat Project

 **Audubon** CHICAGO REGION  
1718 Sherman Ave. Suite 210  
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## *Help Celebrate Local Heroes!*



Illustration: Lynda Wallis

The program includes a social hour, followed by dinner and presentations of awards. We are honored to have former Commissioner of the Chicago Department of the Environment Suzanne Malec-McKenna as a featured (brief) speaker. The heart of the event is the amazing stories of the heroes – and our warm applause for each.

Join us from **5:00 to 8:00 p.m., Saturday, March 10**, at the **Brookfield Zoo**. Bring new potential leaders. Bring friends and family. These stories and this event are a powerful way to teach conservation. Please RSVP to Janis Wesley at [jwesley@audubon.org](mailto:jwesley@audubon.org) or 847-328-1250.

Please join us for dinner on Saturday, March 10 to recognize current and past recipients of the Habitat Project's Conservation Leadership Awards. This is a time to relax, enjoy each other's company, and hear about the inspiring accomplishments and challenges of some of our conservation community friends and heroes. And it's a fine opportunity during chilly times to come together, celebrate, hope for a good burn season, and dream of Spring!

Since 2002, more than 125 of our friends and colleagues have been recognized with a Leadership Award. Nominated and approved by our community, these awards celebrate great work, honor the people doing this work, and lead to local news articles that raise public awareness of local conservation.

